

PRESS RELEASE

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October 15, 2021

Contact: Allison Henderson

916-327-0157 or allison.henderson@opr.ca.gov

Governor Newsom Signs Law to Improve Military Spouse Employment in California

SACRAMENTO – Late Friday night, October 8, Governor Newsom signed a bill by Assembly Member Rudy Salas (D-Bakersfield) that improves the quality of life for military families in the state. The bill, which makes all licenses under the Department of Consumer Affairs available for spouses of military servicemembers to apply for temporary licensure upon being stationed in the state. This information must be made available on each board's website along with information on permanent licensure by endorsement or credential for out-of-state applications and other related information for military spouse and family applicants. Further, this bill requires that the Departments of Consumer Affairs and Real Estate compile and submit annual reports to the Legislature containing specified information relating to the professional licensure of veterans, servicemembers and their spouses.

California, historically the state with the largest population of active duty and veteran servicemembers, has 162,000 military members in the state today, by far the largest in the nation. With over 32 military installations and activities in the state, California also has the most community impact from the military throughout the nation. Until this week, it has also been one of the remaining states with no significant legislation to facilitate career stability for military spouses by removing barriers to their employment in these communities. When speaking virtually with aerospace industry members at a Governor's Military Council and Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development event early last year, Governor Newsom stated that military spousal licensure was an issue California needed to fix. The Governor's Military Council (GMC) is thrilled to announce that through coordinated efforts with the local military communities, the Department of Defense, the California Defense Communities Alliance, the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development and the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the signed legislation today brings us a giant step closer to achieving his goals. "This bill is a win-win enabling a qualified work pool segment who want to work the ability to quickly fill workforce needs of employers, exclaimed GMC Chair, Vice Admiral (ret.) Jody Breckenridge. "Our experience in working with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing is that qualified military spouses are filling critical gaps often in remote areas."

Due to the highly-mobile nature of military service, military spouses face a 24% unemployment rate, much higher than the rate of the public and AB 107 creates the ability for hard working members of our national security branches to feel welcome in the state and improve the ability of families to create stability in their homes and communities. This bill allows military spouses, who already make extraordinary sacrifices in service to our country, to continue their professions. California joins many other states in doing what it can to support the thousands of military families coming into the state by reducing the regulatory barriers to allow military spouses to secure a job here.

The recent impacts of COVID on the state's healthcare system have demonstrated a need to increase access to qualified healthcare workers such as Doctors, Nurses and Physicians Assistants, all of which fall under the Department Consumer Affairs. Governor Newsom saw a ready workforce that can contribute to California's most depleted industries and signed this legislation to create an opportunity for military family members, who are certified in one or more other states, to continue to practice their skills, contribute to their families and provide a better quality of life for their families and California communities.

"Implementing licensure portability measures will help to reduce employment barriers for military spouses, improving military family stability and quality of life," said Marcus Beauregard, director for the Department's Defense-State Liaison Office. "More than one-third of military spouses work in occupations that require licenses. Reducing the burden of licensure will also increase the pool of applicants in critical career fields experiencing shortages, such as health care and teaching, especially in military communities."

The California Defense Communities Alliance (CDCA), an organization that collaborates efforts within local defense communities across the state, is encouraged that Governor Newsom signed AB 107. In recognition that many spouses in the state are currently unemployed or underemployed in their communities, CDCA Co-Chairperson and CEO of the San Diego Military Advisory Council (SDMAC) Mark Balmert stated that, "it was time for California to join so many other states in making temporary licenses accessible and allow military spouses to contribute to their respective professional fields. Our state will have thousands more qualified professionals in important fields including healthcare."

Finally, all branches of the military have established military spouse employment as a key aspect of supporting military families and as such a factor for consideration of all new and existing mission locations. As a state that realized over \$181.2 billion in economic impact in FY19 over numerous industries due to the spending on military and national security activities in the state, this legislation increases California's opportunities to maintain a competitive stance in future mission-basing decisions and protect those that are currently serving the state today.